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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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SUBJECT: NIGER: COURTESY CALL BY ICRC MISSION CHIEF

11. (SBU) On October 29, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mission Chief Nicolai Panke paid a courtesy call on Ambassador Allen, with DCM and RSO joining. Panke, who arrived in Niger in August 2008, said the ICRC's staff included seven expatriates, including one based in Agadez, and 40 local staff. Panke is responsible for both Mali and Niger.

12. (U) Panke listed principal ICRC objectives in Niger as including visiting detainees in prison, training security forces in observing human rights, including international humanitarian law, and coordinating efforts and support for the Nigerien, French, and Irish Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in-country.

13. (SBU) Panke noted although the ICRC coordinated its field travel with the Ministries of National Defense and of Justice, it typically sought to conduct visits without obligatory escorts to retain impartiality. He added that Nigerien Red Cross/Red Crescent Society needs included both training and financial resources.

ALLEN